

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for comparing objects comprising:
selecting a first object and a second object, each object associated with an instance of at least one primary parameter and an instance of at least one secondary
5 parameter, each secondary parameter associated with one of the primary parameters;
comparing at least a portion of the first object and at least a portion of the second object to identify one or more differences between the selected objects; and
identifying at least a portion of the differences as ignorable based, at least in part, on the one or more primary parameters.
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2. The method of Claim 1, each secondary parameter instance comprising an identifier and a value.
3. The method of Claim 2, each difference selected from the group
15 consisting of the following:
secondary parameter identifier difference;
secondary parameter value difference; and
parameter group difference.
- 20 4. The method of Claim 2, further comprising selecting a subset of the secondary parameters from each object for comparison based, at least in part, on one or more characteristics of each secondary parameter.
- 25 5. The method of Claim 4, wherein comparing at least a portion of the first object and at least a portion of second object comprises comparing the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the first object and the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the second object.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein comparing the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the first object and the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the second object comprises:

5 selecting one secondary parameter instance from each subset, each selected secondary parameter instance comprising a substantially similar name and a unique value;

determining a non-potentially dependent portion for each selected secondary parameter instance, the non-potentially dependent portion comprising the value of the secondary parameter instance minus a value of the associated primary parameter
10 instance; and

in response to, at least in part, each non-potentially dependent portion being substantially identical, identifying the selected secondary parameter instance differences as ignorable.

15 7. The method of Claim 1, the first and second object comprising a first and a second configuration of one software application.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising partially restoring the first object based on the second object using at least a portion of differences not identified
20 as ignorable.

9. The method of Claim 8, further comprising:
selecting one or more primary parameters to be restored; and
selecting a secondary parameter instance from each object, the secondary
25 parameter instance associated with one of the selected primary parameters;

determining a non-dependent portion for each selected secondary parameter instance, the non-dependent portion comprising the value of the secondary parameter instance minus a value of the associated primary parameter instance; and

30 replacing each selected secondary parameter instance from the first object with the primary parameter instance from the second object and the non-dependent portion from the selected secondary parameter instance from the first object.

10. The method of Claim 1, one of the primary parameters comprising a system or environment variable.

11. The method of Claim 1, each object comprising a database definition
5 object.

12. The method of Claim 1, each object comprising a configuration file including at least one path structure parameter.

13. Software for comparing objects, the software encoded in media and operable when executed to:

select a first object and a second object, each object associated with an instance of at least one primary parameter and an instance of at least one secondary
5 parameter, each secondary parameter associated with one of the primary parameters;

compare at least a portion of the first object and at least a portion of the second object to identify one or more differences between the selected objects; and

identify at least a portion of the differences as ignorable based, at least in part, on the one or more primary parameters.

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14. The software of Claim 13, each secondary parameter instance comprising an identifier and a value.

15 15. The software of Claim 14, each difference selected from the group consisting of the following:

secondary parameter name difference;
secondary parameter value difference; and
parameter group difference.

20 16. The software of Claim 14, further operable to select a subset of the secondary parameters from each object for comparison based, at least in part, on one or more characteristics of each secondary parameter.

25 17. The software of Claim 16, wherein the software operable to compare at least a portion of the first object and at least a portion of the second object comprises software operable to compare the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the first object and the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the second object.

18. The software of Claim 17, wherein the software operable to compare the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the first object and the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the second object comprises software operable to:

5 select one secondary parameter instance from each subset, each selected secondary parameter instance comprising a substantially similar name and a unique value;

 determine a non-potentially dependent portion for each selected secondary parameter instance, the non-potentially dependent portion comprising the value of the
10 secondary parameter instance minus a value of the associated primary parameter instance; and

 in response to, at least in part, each non-potentially dependent portion being substantially identical, identify the selected secondary parameter instances as
 ignorable.

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19. The software of Claim 13, the first and second object comprising a first and a second configuration of one software application.

20. The software of Claim 13, further operable to partially restore the first
20 object based on the second object using at least a portion of differences not identified as ignorable.

21. The software of Claim 20, wherein the software operable to partially restore the first object based on the second object comprises software operable to:
- select one or more primary parameters to be restored; and
 - select a secondary parameter instance from each object, the secondary
- 5 parameter instance associated with one of the selected primary parameters;
- determine a non-dependent portion for each selected secondary parameter instance, the non-dependent portion comprising the value of the secondary parameter instance minus a value of the associated primary parameter instance; and
 - replace each selected secondary parameter instance from the first object with
- 10 the primary parameter instance from the second object and the non-dependent portion from the selected secondary parameter instance from the first object.
22. The software of Claim 13, one of the primary parameters comprising a
- 15 system or environment variable.
23. The software of Claim 13, each object comprising a database definition object.
24. The software of Claim 13, each object comprising a configuration file
- 20 including at least one path structure parameter.

25. A system for comparing objects, comprises:
memory for storing a plurality of objects, each object associated with an
instance of at least one primary parameter and an instance of at least one secondary
parameter, each secondary parameter associated with one of the primary parameters;
5 and
one or more processors collectively operable to:
select a first object and a second object from the plurality of objects;
compare at least a portion of the first object and at least a portion of the
second object to identify one or more differences between the selected objects; and
10 identify at least a portion of the differences as ignorable based, at least
in part, on the one or more primary parameters.

26. The system of Claim 25, each secondary parameter instance
comprising an identifier and a value.
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27. The system of Claim 26, each difference selected from the group
consisting of the following:
secondary parameter name difference;
secondary parameter value difference; and
20 parameter group difference.

28. The system of Claim 26, the processors further operable to select a
subset of the secondary parameters from each object for comparison based, at least in
part, on one or more characteristics of each secondary parameter.
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29. The system of Claim 28, wherein the processors operable to compare
at least a portion of the first object and at least a portion of the second object comprise
processors operable to compare the selected subset of secondary parameter instances
of the first object and the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the
30 second object.

30. The system of Claim 29, wherein the processors operable to compare the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the first object and the selected subset of secondary parameter instances of the second object comprise processors operable to:

5 select one secondary parameter instance from each subset, each selected secondary parameter instance comprising a substantially similar name and a unique value;

 determine a non-potentially dependent portion for each selected secondary parameter instance, the non-potentially dependent portion comprising the value of the
10 secondary parameter instance minus a value of the associated primary parameter instance; and

 in response to, at least in part, each non-potentially dependent portion being substantially identical, identify the selected secondary parameter instances as ignorable.

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31. The system of Claim 25, the first and second object comprising a first and a second configuration of one software application.

32. The system of Claim 25, the processors further operable to partially
20 restore the first object based on the second object using at least a portion of differences not identified as ignorable.

33. The system of Claim 32, wherein the processors operable to partially restore the first object based on the second object comprise processors operable to:

select one or more primary parameters to be restored; and

5 select a secondary parameter instance from each object, the secondary parameter instance associated with one of the selected primary parameters;

determine a non-dependent portion for each selected secondary parameter instance, the non-dependent portion comprising the value of the secondary parameter instance minus a value of the associated primary parameter instance; and

10 replace each selected secondary parameter instance from the first object with the primary parameter instance from the second object and the non-dependent portion from the selected secondary parameter instance from the first object.

34. The system of Claim 25, one of the primary parameters comprising a system or environment variable.

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35. The system of Claim 25, each object comprising a database definition object.

36. The system of Claim 25, each object comprising a configuration file
20 including at least one path structure parameter.

37. A system for comparing objects comprising:

means for selecting a first object and a second object, each object associated with an instance of at least one primary parameter and an instance of at least one secondary parameter, each secondary parameter associated with one of the primary
5 parameters;

means for comparing at least a portion of the first object and at least a portion of the second object to identify one or more differences between the selected objects;
and

means for identifying at least a portion of the differences as ignorable based, at
10 least in part, on the one or more primary parameters.